

Airline Comments on Options for Dealing With the CRJ-700/900 Ejector Pump Problem**Comair:**

Spoke with: Jim Bender, Director of Safety and Brian Shemp Flight Operations.

Preferred option is a once per day check.

If not once per day, then the center tank empty option is second choice.

Comair has done some testing and could operate most flights with the center tank empty. Bender and Shemp cautioned that there will be some leakage into the tank under normal conditions, and that about once per day crews would have to reset the breakers and empty the tank. This would need to be considered in the AD.

The least favored option is the per flight check. This would seriously impact operations as they have 25-minute turn-around times at outlying airports, and 40-minute turn-around times at hubs. The check would add 10 to 15 minutes to each of these, and disrupt schedules. Comair operates the aircraft between 8 and 11 hours per day, this extra time would have a large impact on the overall schedule. In addition, running engines in the gate area impacts other flights. No other airplanes or service vehicles could pass behind the aircraft while engines are running. This means a single CRJ-700 running engines would not only be delayed itself, but could cause delays for several other flights (even of CRJ-100/200) by delaying service vehicles, or preventing the other aircraft at the gate from taxiing out.

If the per flight check is implemented, it should be left to the operators to decide whether it is done by pilots or maintenance.

AMR:

Spoke with: Steve Harrison, Operations.

AMR has analyzed their routes, and has concluded that operation with the center tank empty is their best option. All but one of their flights can be flown without center tank fuel, and the remaining flight could be adjusted to stop for fuel.

Another point was that the pre flight check precludes single engine taxi, which AMR and other operators have implemented as a fuel saving measure. Based on these factors AMR would opt to fly with the center tank empty.

Horizon:

Spoke with: Mike Huber, Director of Engineering and Ken Jones, Flight Operations

Preferred option is to do the check in flight during cruise. The crew has a relatively low workload at this point, and there is no impact on the schedule.

For Horizon, the center tank empty option is a problem. They have some long-range flights that are presently non-stop, and with the center tank empty, these would have to land and refuel partway through the flight, causing delays. Horizon also uses the center tank to "tanker" fuel from cheaper airports to more expensive ones. Loss of this capability would lead to higher fuel costs. They also mentioned the leakage issue and the need to purge the tank once per day cited by Comair.

If the ground per flight check is implemented, Horizon would prefer to have flight crews do the check during taxi. Although there are workload issues associated with this, it would have the least impact on the schedule.

ASA:

Spoke with: Steve Strickland, Director of Corporate Performance

Preferred option is for the flight crews to do the check. ASA contracts for maintenance at many airports, and having maintenance perform the check will increase the airlines costs, and could cause delays while waiting for maintenance to arrive. The average cost for contract maintenance is \$200 to \$300 per occurrence, if this has to be done for every aircraft on every flight, the cost to ASA would be substantial.

The center tank empty option is a problem for ASA, they operate 25 to 30 non-stop long-range flights. These would have to make a fuel stop without the center tank fuel. This would seriously impact operations and scheduling.

RAA:

Spoke with: Dave Lotterer

Pilots are authorized to pull breakers and could perform the pre flight check.

This option would be preferred over maintenance personnel doing the check. Many operators do not have maintenance crews at all airports, and restricting the check to maintenance personnel would force operators to adjust routes and schedules to keep aircraft at airports with maintenance crews.